

Der Ausfal Des Fluges The Failure of Flight

by Mike Gioe

Category: Haibane Renmei

Genre: Drama, Fantasy

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2005-10-30 05:22:55

Updated: 2006-03-26 07:04:41

Packaged: 2016-04-26 13:45:17

Rating: T

Chapters: 7

Words: 17,460

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: This Fanfic place in quite a different environment than the original. House full of Sinbound Haibane. A gigantic hole torn in the wall. Disappointed Haibane Renmei. False hope. Not looking good, basically. UPDATE: CHAP7!

1. Fire, Newborn, House of Sin

****HAIBANE RENMEI:****

****DER****

****AUSFALL****

****DES****

****FLUGES****

****A fanfiction.****

****By****

****Micheal Gioe****

****(This is a Fanfiction, so I claim no ownership of the Haibane Renmei Title or any of it's original characters or names, except my own)****

-- This is my first FanFic posted here. Everyone here seemed very polite, and very generous in terms of reviews and feedback. I thought I might submit this piece of work I've been slowly chipping away at, although I'm not sure if anyone still reads the tired old Haibane FanFic!--_

****1 â€" Fire****

****Newborn****

****House of Sin****

The intense heat stinging the eyes. The black smoke strangling the throat and vision. A roar like a train as the fire towered high into the sky. Along the horizon, all that could be seen was fire. Dancing, growing, falling fire. The fire that destroyed houses and burned fields, leaving behind only wind and ash. The sky was a cruel blue, holding stars laughing at the Earth as it burned, safe in their heavenly loft. The stars were impaled, however, by a large tower rising from the ground beyond the fire horizon. A dark and ominous sentinel, the tower also watched as the ground beneath it flickered and was destroyed. The tower was shaped like some kind of musical instrument, but it was clearly made of stone. Stone that stayed cold, even with the fire licking it's walls. Etched on the walls all over in gold were the words "Bis Mienen Tod". Now a low cry began to tear across the plains, it's volume overpowering the raging blaze. The cry graduated to a scream of pain.

Now as the screams of what were before pain morphed into short bursts of what now resembled anger, a dim consciousness connected with it's tail to form a loop, thus bringing thought. The recipient of this newly formed consciousness was a girl, who was about fifteen. She opened her eyes slowly at first. She could see nothing but a green and white blur, and hear, or rather feel in her head, the rushing and ebbing of fluids all around her. A sudden sickening thud ripped the girl's eyes open wide. She cautiously looked around.

She could not tell where she was, or why. She appeared to be underwater, maybe in some sort of cave. She would've been dead by now if she was actually underwater, so she figured drowsily that she must be dreaming or she wasn't really encased in fluid. Again the dull thud and a cry. Now the girl was frightened. Someone was coming to get her, she was sure of it.

A great muffled pop came from one of the walls, and a small sound began to fill the place. It sounded like the sucking of air. Another thud, although this time clearer. A multitude of small rifts and lines began forming along the wall, snaking their way up and down. A large crack reverberated. The girl tried to cry out, but only sucked in more harmless liquid. Finally, little bits and chunks of the wall began disappearing, pulled outside. Everything went quiet for a while.

The girl was about to close her eyes to try and rest again when a huge and dark line sprang up the wall of the enclosure, and the walls gave way.

The girl was barely aware that someone was holding her. She was cold and could tell that she was covered in that strange substance. The person who was holding her grumbled something that the girl did not understand.

"No, it's a girl, do you think hers will be white?"

Then a second person spoke up, but their voice was more

muffled.

"Should we go tell Essen?"

"Yeah, of course, but do you think we should stay here and watch her?"

The two people didn't say anything else, but they started walking away. The girl wanted them to stay, she didn't know who they were, but she didn't know where she was either. She tried to open her eyes. It took them a minute to get adjusted.

The girl slowly looked around. She appeared to be in a kitchen of some sorts. A big one. Cold linoleum stung her hands as she propped herself up. A few dim lights were on in this kitchen, and she could see a massive table, as well as a closed door. She should go find those people, ask them where she was perhaps.

She stood, and walked shakily over to the door. She gripped the cold handle and turned it. The door swung open to reveal a long dark hallway, lined with discarded boxes and dust. She might be in a basement somewhere.

The girl heard a low crack, somewhat similar to the cracking of her previous residence. A funny sensation ran down her spine, like someone was taking a cold spoon and running it down the nerves on her spine. Then a sound like paper ripping, only fleshier. And when the girl looked at the ground, she saw a steady pool of dark red liquid running from under her down the hall. The next thing she saw was the hard floor rising up to meet her knees, which made thud when they hit the floor.

Now she could feel it. It felt like someone was prying her very shoulder blades out of her back, and the pain only got worse. She let out a small cry and laid down on the floor.

"Help...someone's...attacking...m" Was all she could get out.

She tried to roll over on her back to see who her assailant was, but when she did, all she saw was ceiling. An incredibly sharp pain made her snap back to her stomach. Tears formed small globs in her eyes and patted to the floor as she weezed sobs. She clawed madly at the floor, trying to reach something to hit herself over the head with, maybe give herself a nap.

"Help! Someone!" She screamed, her voice cracking. "I'm dying!"

The girl was about to ram her head into the far wall when the pain died down a bit. Then a surge of pain shot down her back and she heard a wet and heavy rustling and flapping. She coughed out a low "O" sound and collapsed.

A short brown haired girl walked hurriedly down the dark and damp halls, accompanied on one side by a huge man and a tall, lanky girl with bright, almost orangish red hair. Their wings rustled in the stale air as they hustled down the hall. Their luminescent halos bobbed in step with them.

"So, you're sure she's the one?" The shorter girl puffed across to

the lanky girl.

"Perhaps." The lanky girl didn't look over.

"Fel? Are you sure?" The shorter girl repeated.

"I hope she is. The feathers on my right wing are starting to die already."

The three finally reached their destination. Before them in the hall, a mural of deep blood was smeared along the walls and floor. A slim girl about mid height was standing upright, breathing irregularly. Her hair was a dark grey, like a cat's. She wore a cream colored robe that was complimented by lots of blood. From her back dripped two bloody wings, little bits of skin and organic matter clumped on the wings.

"I can't see 'um from here, what color are they?" The large man grumbled.

"He...Hen...Hee" The girl uttered strange sounds under her breath as she slowly craned her neck around to look at them. Her eyes were pale green.

"When did she hatch, Fel?" The shorter girl quietly asked the lanky one.

"She didn't hatch, ma'lady." The lanky girl shifted her weight but kept her stone face. "Not exactly."

"You broke her shell?" The shorter girl's voice rose a bit. "For what purpose?"

"The shell was old and beginning to rot anyway, she would've died in there had I not-"

"Her wings already grew ma'm, this quick even. She had to have been in there a couple days after she was s'posed to hatch." Grumbled the large man.

"Fine" The short girl shook her head. "I don't care, lets just get her wings cleaned so we can see what color they are."

When the girl next awoke, she was in a bedroom of some sorts. It was large, and had a table, and a couple of closet doors, and some other nicknacks and assorted things. She realized that she often woke up to a place she didn't know, and was anxious to ask somebody what was going on. Luckily for her, when she looked over, she was greeted by the face of the lanky girl she had seen earlier. The girl's thin hands were dabbing a brush in a bowl of water.

"He...Hello." The girl managed to squeak out.

The other girl stopped and looked over at her. A small smile appeared at the corner of her lips, but it faded.

"Have a good nap?" She asked slowly.

"Who are...you?" The girl managed to get out. In her throat, she could taste rusty blood.

"My name here is Felson, but you can call me Fel." The thin girl again showed a tiny smile. It didn't look forced, but it looked like that was all she could do.

"Are you a...bird?" The girl dreamily said.

On the back of the lanky girl were a pair of pitch black wings, like crow's wings.

"No, no." A flash of anger came over the girl's face, but then it was gone.

"What are you doing?" The girl tried to sit up, but it felt like someone was sitting on her back.

"I'm brushing your wings. If I don't, then we can't see how pretty they are." The girl's face remained the same.

"Wings?" The girl tried to turn her head back.

She thought she saw something, maybe, sticking out of her back, but it was dark in the room, so it could've been anything. That's when she realized she was wearing just a cream gown, and the top half of it had been undone. She bolted up and pulled the gown tight around herself, backing away slightly.

"What?" The girl's eyebrow raised slightly. "Did I hurt you?"

"Where are my clothes?" The girl shouted.

"Clothes? I don't think you had any when you came in." The girl looked around the room slowly, then looked back at the girl.

"Here, I'll tell you what. I'll give you a name so you won't feel so scared. Would you like that?" The thin girl cooed like someone trying to convince an animal to eat from their hands.

"I have...a name." The girl shook her head.

"Okay, tell me what it is, then." The thin girl gave a wide, low smile.

"It's A...an...a...al...Mi...I...I don't know." The girl cast her gaze at the floor. "Maybe it starts with S...Sa...So...S..." She looked back up at the girl, horrified. "Why can't I remember it? I know I have one!"

"Calm down, you're gonna hurt your wings." Came a voice from the door.

There stood the shorter brown-haired girl, carrying a slender book under her arm.

"Who are you?" The girl was starting to feel cornered.

"My name's Essen." The girl advanced into the room.

The girl called Essen sat on the floor next to the bed. She flipped through pages of the slim book, and hummed a bit.

"Are you done cleaning the feathers?" Essen called to Fel without looking.

"No. I'm almost done though, and we should be able to see their color when I fix the lamp."

"Oh, it's gone out again?"

"Yeah. Damn this stupid building."

"Okay, so, NewGirl. Yes, you. What happened in your shell dream?"

"Shell Dream?"

"Yes." Essen looked up. "The only dream you ever had here that you can remember."

"The one before I cracked your shell." Fel leaned in a bit.

"Uh, yes...I do think I had one." The girl chewed her bottom lip a bit.

"Well, in my dream, uh, all I remember was fire, and things burning."

"Were you burning?" Essen asked in a low tone.

The girl was startled. She thought for another moment.

"No, I don't know. I might have been."

"Anything else?"

"A tower...maybe."

"Okay, but it was mainly about burning, right?"

Essen flipped through some more pages. She stopped on a page and hummed some more.

"Okay." She stopped. "Brennen means burning, roughly. So that's your name, Brennen."

"Brennen?" The girl thought some more for a moment.

"Yep. Not the prettiest name." Essen nodded. "But Hell, it's cooler than mine." She chuckled a bit and looked up at the new Brennen.

"Essen...sounds okay." Brennen tried to give a smile.

"Maybe until you translate it. It means 'Eating'."

"What book is that?" Brennen pointed to the book.

"I think it's a dictionary. All the books around here are written in this language, whatever it is." She held up the book, with peeling letters that read "AUF DUETSCH"

"So you're named for your Shell Dream?"

"Right."

"Where am I?" The girl looked about again.

The room she was in had a small singular door that lead to what looked like a balcony. Moonlight streamed in from outside, casting pale light on the rest of the room. The floor was wooden, and had a big rug covering most of it. The walls were paisly and had a few random pictures hanging on them, but no people inhabited the frames. Only paintings of vast blue and buildings.

"You're in what some would have called "The Old House." But, nowadays, with things the way they are, we call it "The House of Sin." Some may even call it "The Haunted House" because of noises late at night and such, but it's not that bad. Not the house itself anyways. It's some kind of mansion with a whole Hell of a lot of rooms, and it looks like it's been added onto a lot.

"Don't forget the town." Fel added as she brushed.

Somehow the brushing of Brennens supposed wings soothed her a bit, like someone brushing her hair. She looked back again. Yes, she did have wings after all. She would have to tell everyone back home. Home?

"Can I go home?" Brennen quickly snapped her head to Essen.

"If you can swim."

"What?"

"Nevermind her." Fel leaned around Brennen. "I'm sorry to say that you cannot leave here. Unless you can tell me where you live."

"No."

"There then."

"How's the wings comin, Fel?" Essen went back to reading the book.

"They're done, let me just adjust this lamp here." Fel got up and began tinkering with it.

The lamp clicked, and clicked again. Suddenly the room was bathed in a warm light. Fel looked over at Brennen, then stopped dead. Her eyes fixed on Brennen's wings. Her eyes widened, then her eyebrows bent in the center, and Fel's lips started to quiver.

"Is...Is something wrong?" Brennen sat up a bit.

"Fel?" Essen looked up from the book. "Move, I can't see."

Felson covered her mouth, and strangled sobs could be heard.

"Felson, what is it!" Essen got to her feet and came to Felson's side.

"Her...Her wings...They're dark grey!" Felson lowered her face. "We're going to die here. She's Sinbound too, she's not the White Wing!"

_ -- Okay, so "White Wing" sounds all cheesy and made-up, right? Well, don't worry, it'll get...oh, spoilers, right...Anyways. Um, some Housekeeping notes before I get flamed for mixing up the Haibane Renmei Universe. I do NOT speak any lick of Japanese, and I don't want to pretend to by slapping on some memorized dime-store Japanese names. Don't get me wrong, Japan is great and all, but 1. I don't know the language enough to do it justice, and 2. Story Reasons. _

_ You might figure out why I changed the language of the story, the town, and the Haibanes themselves later, or I'll probably just tell you.-- _

I hope you enjoyed. Please read on, Review, or some combo of the two.

2. White Wings, Wall, Traurigket

****HAIBANE RENMEI:****

****DER****

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-- Thanks for reading, please enjoy, and keep in mind I will probably come back and fix all these horrendous errors and inconsistencies at a later date!--

****2â€" White Wings****

****The Destroyed Wall.****

****Traurigkeit****

_In one small town there was a large house. _

In this house lived many blessed Haibane.

One day, their protection from evil vanished.

Evil thoughts and feelings ate their hearts.

These thoughts would not let the Haibane break their own circles of Sin.

The Haibane could no longer make peace with themselves.

They could no longer achieve a day of flight.

They all became Sinbound.

_The Haibane Renmei, which protected the Haibane, _

refused to help Haibane who were not willing to try.

The Evil prevented them from trying, but there was nothing they could do.

Until one Haibane was born who could break their Circle of Sin.

This Haibane helped others to make their journey as well.

_Even though everyone's wings were black and dead, _

and their halos useless, the Haibane's feathers were White at birth.

_Eventually, The House returned to normal, and _

Haibanes began making their Days of Flight.

_- "White Wing" _

From "Der Letzte Tag" Page 1.

Brennin awoke again to the same room she had been in the night before. She was getting good at waking up, she thought. This time, noone was in the room with her. She wore the same robe as the night before, and her wings were still there. The others had halos, though. Well, some did. The big man did not, if she remembered correctly. But he had wings.

Outside, big heavy grey clouds blockaded the sun, making sure that only dim patches of light entered the room. Brennin had hoped she would wake up at home, wherever that was. Maybe she would wake up in a bit.

Suddenly, there was a low thud from the closet. Brennen froze. It was quiet again. Then another thud, but louder.

"Help!" Brennen called as loud as she could.

"What?" A sleepy looking Essen opened the door to Brennen's room.

"There's something in the closet." Brennen hugged her legs.

"Oh, I see." Her face drooped a bit and she marched in.

Essen grabbed the little knob to the closet door and slid the door over.

"And you wonder why you're sinbound." Essen put her hands on her slim hips.

"Geez, you had to come in and ruin everything." Came a voice from inside the closet.

Out stepped a medium sized boy with stringy black hair. He brushed the hair back and gave a toothy grin to Brennen, who realizing that she was only in a robe, quickly ripped the sheets up around her shoulders.

"Aw, come on, let's be friends." The boy shot out a scruffy hand, perhaps expecting a handshake. He wasn't getting it.

"Well, I guess this guy here is Trunk." Essen sighed.

"Actually, my full name is Entrunken, thank you." He scowled at Essen, who rolled her eyes.

"His name means "Drowning", but who would wanna drown this loveably guy?" Essen sang sarcastically.

"Your mother." Trunk stiffly retorted.

"Sorry about him being in your room, he does it whenever we get a New Girl in here." Essen's face gave birth to a very wide smile. "And sometimes when we get a New Boy."

"Hey! I told you, I thought he was a chick! He sure as Hell looked like one!"

"He likes to watch 'em sleep." Essen whispered in Brennen's ear.

"You shut up, unless you wanna get some baking soda all over your pillow, see how that'll taste in the morning!" Trunk threatened.

"Who was the boy?" Brennen piped up, hoping to join in.

The room got silent instantly.

"He's not here anymore, it doesn't matter."

The conversation was over.

That afternoon, Brennen got a chance to meet a lot of the house's residence. They all had a rather large lunch in the room that Brennen was staying in. There was Essen, Trunk, and the large man, who Brennen learned was named "Bier". His Shell Dream consisted of him drinking a large amount of alchohol, and Bier is the word for Beer. He was huge, but he was also very nice, and laughed a lot. Almost too much. His characteristic throaty laugh certainly stayed with anyone who heard it forever. Also at the table were a short boy about Essen's height named Stiegen, which roughly meant "Ascending" or "Going up". A girl of Essen's height named Abstieg which meant

"Descending" or "Going down". Although this sounded like they were related, they both swore they didn't know each other, and even argued that their Shells broke months apart. There was a very tall girl named Geschlachtet, her nickname being Gesh. She wouldn't tell Brennen what it meant, however, and her eyes darted eerily from person to person at the table, her lips pursed. The strangest thing about her, though, were her wings. They were black, like everyone else, but Brennin thought she could see what kind of looked like bone under some of the feathers. But she still had a halo, unlike Bier. Come to think of it, Bier was one of the few who didn't have a halo.

As Brennen's eyes reached the farthest down the table, she came across a tall boy, maybe even a young adult. His hair was matted and fine, not like the stringy hair of Trunk. His name was Kiesel, which meant "Rocks." His Shell dream was him climbing huge rocks. He was very quiet, and merely sat his chin on his folded hands and watched the conversations, occasionally casting a too-long-for-comfort-kindof glance at Brennen. Next to Kiesel, in the shadows, sat a girl about Brennen's height. Her hair was a beautiful deep red, complimented by deep blue eyes. She merely sat and watched her plate with a blank stare. Brennen found out through hushed whispers that her name was Laufen, which meant "Running".

Trunk leaned in close to Brennen and whispered: "She's a real Sad-Girl, you know, cries a bunch, is lonely, needs someone to hold." Trunk grinned.

"Not interested." Brennen glared at Trunk.

"Oh, oh you thought." Trunk drew back as if insulted. "No, I meant...well, okay, yeah sure, but I was just kiddin'."

Trunk grinned again and looked out the window for a second.

"Hm. Looks like rain."

"So, Brennen, you were born where?" Essen was studying a cup of coffee.

"In...this old kitchen, in the basement, I think." Brennen also studied her coffee, which didn't really look all that appetizing.

"Wow, you know, we never use that anymore." Piped Gesh.

"Yeah, if it hadn'ta been for Fel goin downstairs to pick up some flour, this little lady woulda hatched all alone." Boomed Bier, followed by a deep chuckle.

"You know what, I've been thinkin." Trunks jumped in. "Brennen's not the best name for such a cute girl."

Brennen looked at her plate.

"How about Bren? Or maybe Ren? We don't really care much for names around here, that's why a lot of us have nicknames." Trunk explained.

"Ren...sounds okay." Brennen nodded slowly.

"There, now that's better." Trunk laughed.

After a few more minutes of eating and chatter, Ren decided to start asking the questions she had been holding in for what seemed like forever.

"Where are we? Why can't anyone leave, or remember where to leave to?" Ren tried to lower her voice as she leaned in a bit to Essen.

"I told you about the house, right? Well, this house lies outside of a pretty large town. Why we can't...well, couldn't leave before is...there's this big wall, and-"

"Ah, tellin' the big wall story again, eh?" Bier bellowed.

"Did you tell her the part about it exploding?" Came an excited cry from Stiegen.

At this everyone stopped talking and looked over at Essen. Even the quiet redhead at the end of the table looked over.

"Well." Essen started. "There's this big stone wall that separates this town from pretty much everything else. This wall also is alive, it can make those who get near it sick, or those who touch it injured. No one can go beyond these big walls, not the townspeople, not anybody."

"'Cept the Vermittler." Abstieg chimed.

"Yeah, but I'll get to them." Essen wagged a finger. "So it's pretty much impassable, right? Well, one night, we hear this big boom. Like thunder, only louder, and it shook the house. So we all go outside to investigate. Guess what? There was this mother of all holes, right in the middle of the wall! We could still see the dust in the morning!" Essen gave a chuckle. "But..." She paused. "The wall was what kept Evil out of this town. Now a lot of us...okay, most of us, are sinbound because of it."

"Who...who broke the wall?" Ren asked.

"No one knows for sure. The Vermittler were crawling all over it within minutes, along with a bunch of gatekeepers and other important looking people. Ever since then, they've put people in their homes and forbidden us to leave The Old House, unless it's for official business with the Haibane Renmei. They say they'll have it fixed soon, but I doubt it."

"How long has it been since it happened?"

"Uhm. Lets see. I was here when it happened. Bier wasn't. Gesh wasn't. Fel wasn't. I think only me, Trunk, Laufen, and Kiesel were here. Maybe six years ago?"

"Well, yeah, you guys and the rest of the house." Abstieg pointed out.

"The rest? There's more?" Ren turned back to Essen.

"Yeah. There's quite a lot, in fact, who live in this house. All you see here is maybe 30 percent, roughly."

"Wow." Ren tried to imagine how many that was.

"Yeah, but the others formed groups, kinda like ours here, and we don't see or talk to them much."

"Um, I know I'm asking a lot of questions, and this is taking a long time, but..." Ren started.

"No, go ahead. You have a right to ask." Essen leaned back in her chair.

"What's the Haibane Renmei, and what's Sinbound?"

After about a half hour of explanation from Essen, who kindof seemed to enjoy lecturing, Ren learned that the House was not on friendly terms with the Haibane Renmei. They were not on friendly terms with the town. She also found out that Vermittler was the name for the only people who could legally go outside the walls. They also assisted the Haibane Renmei. She also learned that sinbound meant you could not take your day of flight, which was when a Haibane leaves their town to possibly go somewhere better. The Sinbound can't do this, and they often vanish as well, often after a long period of living in this world.

Gradually, the conversation returned to other matters. Lunch hour was just about over, when something caught Ren's eye. The redhead girl at the end of the table was staring at her. It began to make Ren uncomfortable. Suddenly, she thought she saw a little flash, like a spark. Then another. It was coming from Laufen's halo. A tiny fletcher of glowing material fell from her halo and softly "Pink" 'd on her plate. She immediately shot up out of her seat, like her pants were on fire. She gripped her halo with both hands tightly, and walked quickly from the room.

"Hey, Laufen, what's goin on!" Essen leaned towards the empty doorway and called, but got no answer.

"Why isn't Felson joining us today?" Ren asked, trying to change the subject.

"Oh, she's mad cause you're not the Whitewing." Essen briefly explained the legend of the Whitewing.

"I'm sorry." Ren looked down.

"Hey, it's fine." A little smile appeared on Essen's face. Something twinkled in her eyes. Something odd. Something Ren couldn't place.

"She really believes strongly in that legend then, doesn't she?" Ren looked out the door as Abstieg and Stiegen shuffled out.

"Yeah." Essen chewed thoughtfully. "We found the book behind the Illusion Frame, and she's been hoping ever since that-"

"Illusion Frame?" Ren looked around the room, perhaps expecting to see a mirror.

"Oh, right. Well, it's not something you wanna see by yourself. It's hanging somewhere near the back halls of the House, on one of the higher levels, I think.

"Why wouldn't I want to see it alone?" Ren started to feel a bit disturbed.

"Cause it's haunted, that's why." Gesh giggled as she walked past Ren on her way out.

"Please. Nothing in this house is haunted." Essen scoffed as Trunk got up to leave as well.

"Hey, uhm, Essen?"

"Yeah Ren?"

"How come some of you don't have halos?" Ren stared at Essen's halo.

"Cause you probably won't need one. Everybody here's Sinbound, and it just hurts when you lose your halo anyway." Essen shrugged indifferently.

"You lose your halo?" Ren's eyes widened.

"Yeah, and your wings too." Essen nodded. "First they get really black, then they just...I guess peel off one by one, and you shed them."

"I...I really...want a halo." Ren smiled at Essen sheepishly.

"Really? Okay." Essen nodded, and a tiny flicker of respect crossed her face.

"Where do you keep them?" Ren looked around.

Kiesel got up and slowly walked out the door.

"No, we don't have any here." Essen sighed. "We have to go to the Haibane Renmei."

_ -Okay, so maybe not a HUGE cliff-hanger, but why not read on anyways? As always, reviews are appreciated.-_

_ Again, I hope you enjoyed, and please feel free to leave a review or ask a question. Thanks!_

3. Town Watch, Blood, Mystery

****HAIBANE RENMEI:****

****DER****

****AUSFALL****

****DES****

****FLUGES****

****A fanfiction.****

****By****

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-- This is where the story picks up (hopefully)and you get to see some familiar faces, but still things are different. Thanks for your continued reading and reviewing!--_

****3 " Town Watch****

****Blood****

****Mystery****

Eventually they reached the downstairs of the building. A few Haibane that Ren had never seen were mulling around, some sitting and talking with others, a few nibbling on bits of food. A few were against walls either crying or laughing. Ren didn't like this. She wanted to be back with her now-familiar group. She knew she probably couldn't go home, but at least she wanted to be in the company of friends.

"New Girl?" One of the male Haibane strolled past them and glanced at Ren, maybe with a glance that was a little too friendly.

"Yeah." Essen tugged on Ren's hand to get her to walk a bit faster.

All the Haibane here also had black wings, some had halos. The common room she was now in was tall, about three stories or so, and had little balconies branching off upstairs. On the ceiling, a gigantic mural of a waterfall produced a slight calming effect. Stylish looking chandeliers hung from high above, casting an orange light around the whole room.

"This place is nice." Ren mused, looking up and all around.

"I guess, but it I will give credit to Gesh. It does get kinda creepy here at night, especially in this room, and in the back hallways, 'cause no one really lives back there.

"I see what you mean." Ren nodded.

Finally they reached the double doors made of a deep red mahogany. Ren pulled the shiny silver handle, and the door swung open to let in a gust of damp, cold air.

The grey sky was the first thing that Ren saw. The dark land beneath was the next. As her eyes slowly adjusted, she was confronted with a rustic stone wall a little bit away.

"Is that the wall?" She asked, blinking slowly.

"No, that's just our wall that separates our house from the rest of the town.

Now Ren could see an archway leading out of the little courtyard in front of the building. As they made their way out into the yard, Ren turned to look up at the house.

The house was old, for sure. It reached four stories up to the sky, and was paneled in old and peeling siding. Little windows every few feet either spewed dusky light or blank darkness. The house was wide as well, it looked like it went around on both sides.

"Does this house have an inner courtyard?" Ren asked.

"Yep. It's square with a hole in the middle, if you were to look at it from the top. No one really uses the inner courtyard, and the back sections of the house are mostly uninhabited."

They exited the shaggy courtyard and now Ren could see a distant patch of grey.

"That's the town, right?"

"Yep."

"What's it called?"

"Traurigkeit"

"Traurigkey?" Ren repeated.

"No, Traurigkeit." Essen corrected as they walked.

"Is it a big town?"

"I don't know. I don't know what to compare it to, I guess." Essen shrugged. "But I think it's pretty good sized."

"Where is the Haibane Renmei? In town?" Ren started dancing on her tiptoes trying to see the distant town better.

"No, it's on the outskirts of town."

"Oh." Ren looked around.

"Nobody really likes to go there, cause there's a graveyard nearby." Essen nodded.

"So where is it then?"

"See that?" Essen pointed to Ren's left.

Ren looked left, expecting to see some kind of stone temple. But she just saw flat grass and waving trees. But then, as she scanned the horizon, she saw a single black line rising up from the trees far away. As they walked on, it became more distinct.

"Is that it? That tower?" Ren squinted.

"Yeah. That's it."

They came to a crossroads. A sign read "HAIBANE RENMEI TEMPLE LEFT, TRAURIGKET STRAIGHT, UPHILL FARMLANDS RIGHT, OLD HOUSE BACK.

Standing like a silent sentinel at the intersection was a tall man in a uniform, his face hidden in shadow. Essen nudged Ren lightly in the side.

"Don't talk." She whispered roughly.

Ren nodded in acknowledgement as the man approached. He looked the two over and cleared his throat.

"Going somewhere, Haibane?" He looked down at them, his grey mustache dancing as he talked.

"Yes. To the Haibane Renmei Temple, sir." Essen bowed slightly and quickly.

"Of course you are." The man nodded. "Have a safe trip."

As they passed him, the man mumbled something.

"Who was that?" Ren whispered over to Essen.

"Community Watch, kinda like the police."

"He doesn't have wings or a halo."

"Nope. Townsfolk and Vermittler don't."

They walked on for a few minutes. Essen kept making sideways glances at Ren. When they had crossed a tiny bridge, Essen stopped Ren.

"Are you okay?" Essen narrowed her eyes a bit.

"Yes, sure. Why?" Ren nodded.

"You're walking funny."

"I am?"

"Yeah, like your back is hurt, or somethin."

Ren did wake up this morning with some back pain, but she had chalked it up to her new wings. But come to think of it, this pain was below her wings a bit.

"It might be." Ren carefully reached a hand around her back, gingerly prodding it. "Owch!" She yelped as a surge of pain ran up her back.

"Here, let me take a look." Essen spun Ren around.

Ren quickly turned around again, and took a step back from Essen.

"Sorry. Can I take a look, please?" Essen looked a bit

impatient.

Ren nodded. Essen untied the back of the robe that Ren was still wearing from yesterday, even though it was caked in a substantial amount of dried blood.

"Holy crap." Essen mused.

"What? What is it?" Ren tried to see behind her.

"Your back's all torn up." Essen murmured quietly. "It's bleeding."

All down Ren's back ran two deep pink gashes from which a steady ooze of blood came. They appeared to be coming from her wings. Essen cautiously reached out a hand to touch one of the wounds. Ren quickly jumped with a squeak.

"Sorry" Essen mumbled flatly.

"Is it bad?" Ren panicked.

"I don't think so."

In truth, the wound didn't look like it ran through any major areas or places where mortal wounds would be found. Essen wasn't sure why she knew this, but she could care less at the moment.

"It's not your wings, I don't think." Essen mumbled.

"What? Are they falling out?" Ren's head snapped as far back as it could to find Essen.

"Huh?" Essen grinned. "Naw, you've only been here two days, don't worry."

"Are we still going to the tower?"

"I guess. Think you can make it?" Essen sighed and looked around.

"I have to, don't I?" Ren tried to stand.

Ren ambled her way on to the tower. As they drew closer, she could see it was made of cold dark stone that hosted a slit window every ten feet across. The tower went up as far as Ren could see. Outside the tower milled some strange looking men clothed in dull robes, their faces hidden by drooping hoods or masks. As the two girls approached, they stopped their work and stared. No one spoke a word.

"Who are these people?" Ren whispered to Essen.

"These are what we call the Vermittler."

"What does that mean?"

"It means Meddler, someone who sticks their noses places they don't belong."

"That is not their proper name." Boomed a deep voice.

"Shut up." Essen hissed and nudged Ren in the side. Hard.

The being from which the voice came slowly moved towards them. It was another man in disguise, his face hidden behind a mask with a hole in the middle, right in the center of the face. Ren wondered for a second how he saw with it in the middle like that. The man looked to be young, his posture was erect. Although, he did carry a slim cane with him, even though he carried it at his side. When he finally reached the two, he glanced at Essen for a moment, and then to Ren.

"You are the new Haibane at the Old House, correct?" His voice held a somewhat grandfatherly tone, slow and melodic.

Ren nodded. The man was quiet for a moment, and then he produced from his robes two little pieces of cloth. Tied to the cloth were tiny bells.

"You are to wear these to communicate when you are in or near the temple, understand?" The man held out his hand. "Ring the right bell for yes, the left for no, using your wings."

Just as Ren was about to take them, something hit the man's hand and the bells flew onto the ground. The man turned as quick as Ren did to see Essen with her hand in the air. The man made a low, quiet grunt and stared at Essen. Essen stared back.

"What are you doing?" The man's voice had lost it's grandfatherliness.

"Look at her back!" Essen pointed to Ren.

The man looked over at Ren. Ren could feel herself blush slightly, and she turned around. She heard another small grunt, but this was not an angry or surprised one.

"This injury is caused by the wings." The man declared, remaining motionless.

Ren's heart sank. She was going to lose her wings just a day after she got them! She'd be alone again in a world of strangers where all she had to fit in were her wings, however dark grey they may be.

"Tell me, young Haibane, what is your name? I permit you to speak"

The question seemed totally random in the face of the horrible news. Ren was close to tears but she decided to answer anyways.

"Brennen, sir." She nodded, her voice wavering.

"Feather Brennen, when you hatched from your Cacoon, how long was it before your wings grew?"

"Almost...immediately." Ren nodded again.

"I see." The man trailed off. "You, then, were hatched too late."

The man helped Ren into the temple while explaining. Essen had been instructed to wait outside.

"You were hatched only moments before your wings were to come. The fluid that fills the Cacoon acts as numbing solution, to cradle the individual and protect them as they grow inside of their Cacoons. The liquid on your body had not had time to dry completely yet, and thus your skin and nerves did not react as they should have when the wings came." The man stopped and looked over at Ren. "Tell me. Did you feel pain when your wings sprouted?"

A flash in Ren's mind showed her that dirty and dark kitchen which she had stumbled through.

"No...uhm...not at first, then I felt it a little bit after it started, I guess." Ren kept her eyes to the ground as she ambled on.

"Yes. The fluid wore off halfway through the process. Your body did not tell your skin to start healing the moment it started splitting to make room for the wings, and thus it was not able to fully heal when the wings had arrived."

"Is...is there something wrong with me?" Ren looked up at the man.

"No, it has happened before to many Haibane." The man shook his head.

"So Felson saved me." Ren thought out loud.

"Hm?" The man continued walking.

"This girl, Felson, she broke my Shell...erm...Cacoon."

"Who is Felson?" The man turned.

"Um, this girl in the Old House, she's tall, and has dark hair...and.." Ren trailed off.

"No Haibane named Felson has ever come to this place." The man turned away and continued walking.

--Wooh! Intrigue! Mystery! Halos! Wasn't it nice to see some familiar faces? er...masks? Read on, if you will!--

_ Again Again, please feel oh-so free to leave some Reviews and Comments, maybe questions? Happy to talk and interested to know what you think. Please read on!_

4. Halo, Flames, Encounter

****HAIBANE RENMEI:****

****DER****

****AUSFALL****

****DES****

****FLUGES****

****A fanfiction.****

****By****

****Micheal Gioe****

****(This is a Fanfiction, so I claim no ownership of the Haibane Renmei Title or any of it's original characters or names, except my own)****

-- Okay, this is where my train slowed to a gentle chug. Uh, yeah, it gets a bit eerie, but a lot will be explained later. Hang in there! Oh, and thanks for reading so far!--

****4 -- Halo****

****Flames****

****Encounter****

The man motioned for Ren to follow him down into the temple. As they progressed, she passed many rooms. Some where colorful and bright, and some were so dark she couldn't see into. All the rooms were made of stone, and resonated a sense of age, but of nobility and quality. They climbed several flights of stairs, and came upon a dark room with a large wooden shaft in the middle. Two other masked men, or the Toga, as the man had corrected her, stood beside it in silence. They cranked a huge handle and a squeaky wooden platform rose up from the floor.

"This is the elevator." The man said abruptly, and motioned for Ren to step on it.

Ren nodded and carefully maneuvered onto the slat. The man stepped onto it next to her, and made a motion to the two men standing by. They began to crank, and the slat slowly lifted. It was amazing it could even go up at all since they were standing on it, thought Ren.

Slowly they were lifted up and up, every now and then passing a window, although Ren was too far away from them to see outside. All she could make out was hazy white and grey. Finally they reached the top, and shimmied through a small opening. Ren's eyes opened wide.

The top room wasn't really a room at all. It was a circular roof surrounded by tall walls cut by windows. The sky above was grey and ominous, and a sort of fog hung around the place. In the middle, lit by a kind of surrealistic gold hue, a tall spire reached up to the sky. All kinds of structures jutted out from it's sides, and it was covered with strange symbols and distrurbingly realistic stone eyes.

With a small breath, the man pointed to an object projecting from the middle. Ren walked onto the roof, and cautiously approached the thing. As she passed the windows on either side of her, she shot a

glance out them. But, just as the sky overhead, all she could see was blank white and gray, swirling around in slow soupy globs. When she got closer to the object, she discovered it to be some kind of handle. She grabbed it and pulled. It slid out of a dark slot, and revealed itself to be some kind of pan, with a hole in the middle. It was made of some kind of lightweight stone, but it was warm to the touch.

Ren walked back to the man who now had produced a pair of tongs. He slowly took the object and pried it open. Within it was a round and glowing object. The man held it high with the tongs, and carefully lowered it to Ren's head. As soon as it came about six inches above her head, he released the tongs and stood back. Ren looked up. The ring was bright and brilliant, and slightly warm.

"The halo signifies you as a Haibane, and means you must uphold your duties as such." He rattled off.

"Why do some Haibane have halos and some don't?" Ren quietly asked.

"Please do not speak to me unless instructed to do so." The man's voice didn't change.

"I'm sorry...oh, uh, I mean...um..." Ren trailed off, unsure of how to apologize.

"You are forgiven. To answer your question-" The man started as their elevator began to go down. "- There is no such thing as a Haibane without a halo. Once you put it on, it cannot be removed. The ones you say do not have halos must have never come to the temple at all.

"So we can never take these off?" Ren realized she spoke to him again.

The man groaned slightly, and realizing that she would probably never respect silence, answered.

"Not unless you become sinbound. Then your halo would be destroyed, along with your wings."

"But I thought if your wings were black then you were already..." Ren trailed off again.

"When your wings are black, you still have a chance at salvation. However, if the wings begin to rot, then they are dead, and so are you, in a sense."

"Dead?"

The man nodded slightly.

"In a sense. You have no chance of salvation, and your days from there will not be pleasant."

"What...what are you?" Ren suddenly asked, not sure why herself.

"What do you mean?" The man looked down at her.

When Ren said nothing, the man looked back at nothing.

"I am the Haibane Renmei Communicator, I speak with outside Toga and regulate the temple."

"So...you're ...the ruler of this town?"

"Uhm-hm" The communicator gave a little chuckle, then shook his head.

"Why does it seem like the Haibane are treated poorly?" Ren stared off into the distance.

"They are not." He replied gruffly.

"But it seems like everyone dislikes them...somehow.."

"The Haibane seem to think this, but it is more of a disappointment."

"Huh?"

"The Haibane are supposed to be upstanding, hardworking creatures who exist to learn from past mistakes and improve the quality of their own lives, along with those around them. They are not supposed to be sinbound, and if they are, they are supposed to fight to break from its plague. However, when part of the wall was destroyed, it let in a small amount of evil from the outside. This evil influenced the Haibane, and made them lean towards sin. After a while, they stopped working, and began becoming rowdy. They soon became disliked."

"So it's the evil's fault." Ren contemplated.

"No, it isn't."

"Huh?"

"Tell Essen you will be fine as long as you stay off your feet for a few days."

Ren hadn't noticed that they were now at the entrance to the temple.

Ren was still contemplating her talk with the communicator while she and Essen walked the long road back to the Old House. Her back was throbbing a bit, but she kept fondling her halo, so it distracted her a bit.

"Wow, you really like that thing." A small smile cut Essen's face.

"Yes...it's really neat."

"Hey, look, the wall!" Essen grabbed Ren's arm and pointed.

Sure enough, a long dark line ran across the horizon, splitting the sky and land. From here the walls didn't look that large, but Essen assured Ren they were huge. When Ren asked where the hole was, Essen sighed and responded that it was on the other side of town, near

Traurigkeit.

As they neared the Old House, the sky was turning a gloomy shade of blue. When they at last entered the big doors into the common room, it was almost deserted. A few somber Haibane stood here and there, milling around.

"Where is everyone?" Ren leaned over to Essen.

"Most likely eating dinner with their circle of friends." Essen sighed.

"Oh that's right." Ren agreed, even though she had no idea what time people did anything here.

"Laufen usually cooks dinner up early so she has time to go on her patrol before it gets too dark."

"Patrol?"

"Yeah. That's kinda her job, together with cooking." Essen nodded.

"She was the one with the halo that sparked, right?"

Essen didn't say anything.

As if on cue, Ren saw Laufen approach from one of the hallways, looking about nervously. At the same time, Essen noticed Felson standing by a decaying floor plant, motioning to her.

"Hey, Ren, I'll be right back." Essen mumbled.

"Um, okay."

Ren walked over in Laufen's general direction. She wasn't sure why, but later she would regret it.

"Uhm." Ren started when she got to Laufen.

Laufen said nothing.

"Uh."

More nothing.

"So...you...cook the food?" Ren struggled.

Laufen nodded minutely

"Okay..."

Ren heard a little coughing sound and realized it was Laufen clearing her throat.

"It's late." She started, her gunmetal eyes searching the floor. "I'm off schedule."

"Schedule?"

"Would you go with me?" Laufen looked up at Ren.

"Where?"

"Patrol." She almost looked like she was going to cry. "It's too dark now, the hallways will be deserted, and it's scary by myself. Would you come?"

"To do what? You're...not very specific."

When Ren said this, she was sure the girl would cry as she watched the turbulence of tiny emotions play across her face.

"I check the rooms. In the back of the house."

"Oh." Ren had been hoping for a better answer.

"Will you come?" Laufen produced a long metallic flashlight.

Ren had been hoping to see more of the house.

Ren had not been hoping to see the uninhabited wing. At night. But as things would have it, that's exactly where she found herself. The cold metal flashlight in her hands bounced an iris of light across the dark halls. It was all Ren could do to keep sight of Laufen, who seemed to be constantly pacing faster than her.

"Hey, what...what are we looking for?" Ren panted as she struggled along.

Laufen didn't answer.

"Hey?" Ren called out.

She had lost Laufen. She was alone. Something shifted just behind her, and she thought she could hear a faint, moist breath. This breath, however, was being sucked in, not pushed out, and it seemed to be struggling, gasping. Ren felt tears forming at the corners of her eyes. She couldn't move.

"Brennen?" It was Laufen.

"Uh...uh..uhya" Ren nodded, her hands shaking, making her flashlight beam dance.

"Don't wander off again." Laufen shook her head

"I didn't...I..." Ren shook her head, swallowing hard.

"Try to stay closer, okay?"

"Okay." Ren nodded violently.

As they walked on, Ren kept trying to figure out exactly what Laufen's job was without actually asking. She kept peeking into rooms and casting her flashlight across the empty spaces. Eventually they came to a balcony which overlooked a room similar to the front common room. It was incredibly dark, however, with only a pale blue light flickering and scaring away the shadows, which slinked back every time the light disappeared.

"This is where a lot of them come." Laufen mumbled to herself.

"Who?"

"The hopeless sinbound." She whispered.

"What's that?"

Ren was pointing across the large room to a dim outline on the far wall, just up the rounded staircase.

"That's the Illusion Frame."

"Oh...the..." Ren pondered.

"What is it?"

"It's a picture frame that looks into Hell." Laufen gave a little grin. "Or so Geschlachtet says."

It was the first time Ren had seen this girl smile. But it wasn't a pleasant smile, it was a knowing smile, maybe one of recognition.

They continued on for a bit until Laufen began to quicken her pace.

"What's wrong?" Ren called.

"My flashlight's running low." Laufen huffed as she paced along.

And then it happened. Laufen stopped dead. She slowly looked to her left, into a darkened hole of a room. She slowly stepped inside, motioning for Ren to stay. She was gone for a few seconds, and Ren didn't like being alone in these long, dim halls, so she crept around the corner. Inside the dingy little room was a plain bed, what looked like a closet, and a large armoire. The walls were peeling badly, and the light was out. Laufen was bent over something Ren couldn't see. Ren stepped in a bit. Then it hit her. An overwhelming surge of fear and disgust for the little room.

The room emanated a sort of sick, mortal vibration one receives when standing in a museum, and Ren felt her stomach tighten. She imagined she could hear whispers, small scratching sounds and low creaks. She felt herself begin to tear up again.

"Lau...Laufen?" Her voice quivered.

Laufen picked something up off the floor and quickly rushed back to the doorway.

"Oh, sorry. It's your first time seeing a Rest."

Ren shook violently and hugged herself to keep from dropping her flashlight.

"Come on. We're done." Laufen gently put a hand on Ren's arm.

Somehow they managed to get back to the brightly lit hallways that hosted a few bustling Haibane, even though just a few. They found their way back to the little common room of their "Group" and Ren was overjoyed to see the now familiar faces. As they enjoyed dinner, Ren couldn't help but notice Laufen continually fingering a round object, turning it over and over, and gazing at it. It was dark and dull, but even New-Born Ren could recognize it. It was a halo.

_ -- Haunted things in Haibane Renmei? It was alluded to a bit in the actual show, so I decided to expand upon it. Graciously. Remember, this is a house filled with Sinful Haibane. You expect it to be pleasant? Oh, and no, Brennen and Laufen are NOT going to get together. Unfortunately, that's something I had to expand on from the original show too. The...ahm...excess of girls spending time together, and stuff. But there's boys in this one to even things out. Trunk. Hm. (Plus, that would stake my rating up to M anyways, then no one would be able to find this!) As for Updating...I'll see what you guys say. I'm not gonna do this if no one really likes it much. Waste of paper...er...files. Hopefully, I'll get some more chappies in later, if circumstances decide. Thank you all so far!--_

_ Thanks for reading so far, and please stay tuned for updates!_

5. Watch, Incident, Hole in the Wall

****HAIBANE RENMEI:****

****DER****

****AUSFALL****

****DES****

****FLUGES****

****A fanfiction.****

****By****

****Micheal Gioe****

****(This is a Fanfiction, so I claim no ownership of the Haibane Renmei Title or any of it's original characters or names, except my own)****

Note: This chapter is a flashback. Be patient, and more shall come. Thanks for reading so far!

5-- Watch

Incident

Hole in the Wall

The snow was coming down hard now. Gusts and volleys of white blew every which way and assaulted the walls of The Old House. Every Haibane inside could hear the howls and screams of winter pounding

outside, and were not taking for granted their given shelter. Inside the upper common room, Essen and Trunk were busy tending to a New Born who was currently fast asleep. He was a cute little boy, whom Trunk had mistaken for a girl, and ceremoniously watched sleep for a few hours before realizing this fact. Essen kept shooting him knowing glances as she brushed the boy's wings.

"You know what I thought." Trunk declared, crossing his arms.

"You better watch." Essen giggled. "One day you might become sinbound."

"I just watch 'em to make sure they don't stop breathing in their sleep, that's all."

"Right."

As Essen continued, she noticed a strange smell. Kind of like lemon and cinammon, mixed together. She looked towards the little kitchen of the room. It was dark, and empty. Trunk was looking around now too.

"Do you...?" Essen motioned to her nose.

"Yeah." Trunk nodded. "I have a nose too."

"No, I mean, can you smell that?" Essen grumbled.

"Sure do."

"What do you-" Essen started.

"Whoa." Trunk grabbed her arm. "Look."

Essen looked down at the boy's wings she was brushing. Under her brush was a pitch black wing. She could assume the other one was black as well.

"Essen...what did you do?" Trunk quietly murmured.

"I didn't do anything, I just...I just..." She gulped.

"Well, what's wrong with him, then?" Trunk stood up quickly.

"I don't know. He might be...sick...uh..." Essen shook her head.

"Might be sick..." Trunk repeated. "We should get the Haibane Renmei, they'll know..." He trailed.

Just then, another weird smell was introduced into the air. This time, it was the smell of burning rubber. A tremendous rumble grew from outside the window. Trunk walked to the window, slight vibrations causing him to make a few misteps.

"Wow, this is good." He laughed. "'Cause this house is soooo stable anyway."

As soon as he had finished his statement, the building lurched violently, and Trunk was thrown on his back. The window panes rattled

loudly, and the lights burned brightly, then went out, throwing the entire house into darkness.

"Wow."

"That was pretty strange. Pretty strange."

"Where's my candle?"

"Pretty Stranger, you're--"

"Shut up."

"Sorry."

"Okay, I found one."

Essen lit a candle and found the room in extreme disarray. Everything seemed to be shifted towards the front wall.

"What the Hell was that?" Trunk's hands shook.

"I dunno. Come on, let's check on everyone." Essen headed for the door.

They hustled down the hallway, and it appeared the same thing had happened to everyone else. Heads were protruding out of doorways, hushed whispers floated about, and scared glances filled the hallways and corridors of the Old House. Eventually they reached the front door, and cautiously tugged it open, followed by a throng of wide-eyed Haibane.

A gargantuan ugly black cloud smothered the dim gray evening sky. Tiny fletchets of bright blue swam in the torrent of ash and smoke. Even though it was far off, Essen could tell it was coming from the wall, somewhere close to the town.

As the parade of spooked Haibane made their way to the town, a frazzled Laufen joined them. She had grass stains on her loafers and a miniscule twig caught in her dark hair.

"Are you okay?" Essen frowned as Laufen came puffing up to her.

"Yes. I was out in the courtyard when everything shook, and I got caught in the branches of some trees." She mumbled as they hustled down the road.

"Or maybe you were out with that guy you like, who was it, Stiegen?" Trunk grinned.

"No." Laufen looked away and shook her head.

A small blush appeared over her nose, and she studied her feet dilligently.

"Okay, busy lady, I know the signs of--" Trunk started.

"Oh my god..." Essen cut them off.

The Haibane crowd had stopped on a hill just a bit from town. Beyond the bright lights and maze of buildings before them, they saw the wall, completely lit up. Hundreds of lanterns and little fires dotted the sides, and many people clambered around it. The Haibane pushed through town, and eventually reached the wall. Directly to the right of the big iron gate, there was a long, large gash, from which clouds of ash and mixed dust milled. The strange odor from before was almost overwhelming here. The Haibane wanted to get closer and see the hole, to find out what happened, when a very grim looking community watchman strolled up to them. He was accompanied by two toga. Beyond them, the Haibane could see the communicator speaking with a thin man in a large black over-coat.

The man wore a mask, like the communicator, but his was different. It was a mask that more closely resembled a human face. The mask only went up to his nose, so his eyes could be seen. His eyes were a cold grey, almost white, and they darted about incredibly fast, and any Haibane that the eyes decided to land on squirmed. He wore wooden wings on his back, like the communicator, but his wings were longer and more spread out, like a crow's. His hair, black, was long on the sides, and trimmed around the front. He carried with him a staff. The staff was silver and had 3 rings locked to it's side. What was the most perplexing however, was that the communicator motioned good-night to the man, and from behind the man walked a toga. The communicator walked right past the man, holding his head in his hand. He hadn't seen him at all. No one did, except the Haibane.

A few hours after all the commotion died down, and the Haibane were shuttled back to their house with the promise of information later. Essen and Trunk wearily dragged themselves towards the common room. Essen wanted to check on the New Born, and then head to her room, and make an effort to sleep.

However, when Essen opened the door, she was greeted with an intense feeling of disgust and decay. The room did not smell, however it was a sensation that ran deeper than any sense. It was the gripping, mortal fear of walking into an open grave, and being grappled by a long deceased corpse. The undead aura filled the room, and Essen literally had to take a step back.

"What's going on!" Trunk yelled at Essen, incredibly loudly.

"Why are you yelling!" Essen yelled back.

"Can't you hear that!" Trunk lowered his voice.

"Hear what?"

But she got no reply, so she decided to venture her way into the room. What she was greeted with was a sight that explained her sudden urge to vomit and then flee. On the bed, the New Boy lay, just as they had left him. However, his wings, or what she supposed were still wings, were caked in deep goo, and a bridge of blood was stretched between them. What littered the floor and bed must have been a pound of feathers, all black and mangled.

"Trunk! Get some towels!" Essen called back as she ran into the room.

The boy was breathing, however it was shallow and raspy. He was

trying to speak, but it was to no avail, except a minute scrap of whisper.

"He...Hen...Hee...Henh...Hennh..."

"Hen what?" Essen gripped the side of the bed.

The boy was fully conscious, in fact he was staring straight at Essen, his eyes bouncing with pain.

"Here." Trunk shoved a towel in front of Essen's face.

"Can't you do it..." She trailed off, staring into the boy's eyes.

"I...I'm not good with blood."

"Come on, you-" Essen turned to confront Trunk, but he had his back turned, and he was rubbing his mouth vigorously. A small reflective prick was running down his face, and it patted softly on the ground.

"Okay, hold still, kid." Essen forced a smile and then proceeded to try to scrub the goop and blood off. She was horrified to find what was underneath.

Bone. Skinny, grey, hard bone. Clumps of the goo glistened in the glow of the white torrents outside.

"Enough, I am finished." The boy monotonely mumbled.

"What?" Essen scooted back a bit.

The boy shot up out of bed, his head cocked at a dead angle.

"Hey! Lay back down!" Essen cried at the boy.

The boy bounded out of the room and tore down the hallway, his horrible bones bouncing like spikes on the back of a running dragon. He kept making grotesque noises and grunts all the way down the hallway as he hurried towards the back sections of the house.

"Is he...gone?" Trunk turned around.

"Yeah, he's gone." Essen lowered her head.

"What the Hell is going on?" Trunk's voice cracked.

"I don't know, we'll go look for him in the morni-"

"No, I mean, us too."

"Huh?"

"Look at our wings." Trunk flipped on a light.

"Black. Black like tar."

Essen slumped on the bed, effectively collecting some goo and feathers on her legs. She stared off at the wall, which eventually

blurred, and she tasted salt.

--Know who blew a hole in the wall yet? I do. Of course, I probably should. Don't worry about it, though, It should be revealed soon enough, although if you can figure it out before then, I'll be your best friend. (It wont be hard, I'm not good at making things hard to figure out.) More to come, Please read on when the updates come!--_

Thank you for reading, and have a nice day!

6. Prophecy, Friction, Pie

****HAIBANE RENMEI:****

****DER****

****AUSFALL****

****DES****

****FLUGES****

****A fanfiction.****

****By****

****Micheal Gioe****

****(This is a Fanfiction, so I claim no ownership of the Haibane Renmei Title or any of it's original characters or names, except my own)****

-- _This chapter may be a bit long. But there's a bunch of character stuff I've gotta get outta the way. Don't worry, this one's not a flash-back, and this chapter leads into the next one, which should be pretty decent._

****6-- Prophecy****

****Friction****

****pie****

Ren had been told to keep off her feet by the old man at the temple, so that's exactly what she did the next day. Besides, she sort of wanted to stay in that room, the room that everyone used, instead, of out in those dreary hallways. Although, staying in that commonly used room had some drawbacks.

For instance, she attempted to leaf through some books Essen gave her to read, but that came to no avail. Someone would always walk in and sit down, trying to start up small talk with Ren. She really didn't want to talk right now. A lot of things were sifting through her mind. A lot. The only person whom she found mildly engaging to hold a conversation with was Bier. No matter what he was talking about, it was how he talked about it that made you want to listen and join in. Always, a joke or two was slipped into a story, or he would exaggerate the voices of others when telling about a part of their

past in the house. His brown mustache bobbed every time he gave a deep chuckle, and his large, long smile forced a smile from anyone's lips who saw it.

"But the best part, was when she accident'ly blew up half the kitchen with one 'o her famous pies!" Bier chuckled as he recounted Laufen's early cooking adventures, which led to her becoming an excellent chef for their group.

"So she cooks good pies?" Ren smiled up from a large book she was flipping through indifferently.

"Naw, she doesn't cook, littl' one, she calls the angels down, kills, 'em, and stuffs 'em in the crust!"

"So they're good?"

"Oh child, they're the only reason to live in this little hole of a house!" Bier boomed.

"Why..." Ren started, then pretended not to have said anything.

"Hm?" Bier patted his knee.

"What do you...I mean, why do you think we're here? Why is everyone here sinbound? Why can't-" Ren sat up a bit.

"Child." Bier started. His smile didn't falter, but his eyes grew soft as her cocked his head a bit.

"No one knows, littl' one." Bier looked out the window. "It doesn't seem fair, does it? But we all must have done something, sometime or another, to have become sinbound. I don't know what it is, but something in this place, this entire town, isn't right. Something's off, and I've always know'd it. You're right, we're all born sinbound, and no one here since the wall, has ever been born otherwise. But there's no point in being depressed or worried, littl' lady." Bier clapped his big hand on Ren's shoulder.

"There's nothing we can do. Don't worry yourself over it. Everyone is scared at first. They try to find the way out, but it's a selfish journey, it is.

"Selfish journey?" Ren's eyes were tingling.

"You just take it easy, littl' one, gotta give your back time to heal." He smiled a smile that forced his eyes shut, laugh wrinkles pulling at his closed eyelids.

Bier shuffled out of the room, and gently closed the door.

Ren was walking slowly in a wooden hallway filled with yellow, passive light. As she walked, she noticed someone standing in the middle of the hallway. It was a familiar figure, but she couldn't place the name at first. Then it came to her. It was Abstiegen. Abstiegen smiled up at Ren as she walked by. Ren stopped and talked to Abstiegen, although afterward she couldn't remember at all what she had said. Before she knew it, Stiegen was at Abstiegen's side. He had his arm on her shoulder and he was leaning his face in close to

hers, blinking slowly.

"Me." Ren pointed to the floor.

Abstiegen nodded and reached her hand out to Ren. Her hand slowly formed a cup. The sound of ripping flesh was heard reverberating off the walls. Abstiegen and Stiegen both looked up in unison. Ren followed suite. Above them was a tall ceiling capped with a beautiful stained glass dome. Suspended by many wires and chains from the ceiling, was an immense object. As Ren watched, the object shifted and melted to form a creature. Or some kind of sculpture. Whatever it was, it was moving. It was

Henheftsilenfirre

And then it wasn't. The hallway wasn't. Stiegen wasn't. All that was there was Ren and Abstiegen, but abstiegeN was something else now. She was different. Hunched. Dripping. Smiling. Dead and lively eyes of abstiegeN. And then came the breathing. Wet and rasping. Tearing at her ears. Then Ren was not. She was not, but the thing was still there, in the Henheftsilenfirre, with the Balail. With the Beast.

When Ren awoke, her face was making acquaintances with the page of a particularly boring book. Actually past making acquaintances, now they were good friends, and they were just sitting down to dinner. Ren pried the book off her cheek and looked around the room. A dusky blue filled the room, giving way to the glow of a candle at one end of the room. A figure held the candle. It was Felson.

Ren wanted to call out to Fel, but she was sleeping, or so it appeared. Ren licked her lips and noticed that they were rough and dry. She pushed herself gingerly out of bed, and limped to the tiny kitchen area. Her back hurt a bit, but she was more stiff than anything.

She opened the flimsy door to the kitchen and stumbled inside. She was greeted by the back of someone's head right in her face. She stifled a cry and backed out of the kitchen. Laufen came out slowly, looking around warily.

"Um. Sorry, Ren." Her eyebrows bent upwards sheepishly.

"What...what are you doing here?" Ren hissed.

"I was keeping watch on you. Uh, Felson was supposed to, but she fell asleep, and when I came in...well, no one was here to make sure you were okay."

"But you can't watch me from the kitchen." Ren raised an eyebrow.

"Yeah...um...I know." Laufen nodded slowly.

They stood for a moment in what proved to be extremely awkward silence.

"I was going to make some food...for when you woke up, that is." Laufen smiled a bit.

"Oh." Ren nodded too.

"Well, I have to get back to my...rounds." Laufen shifted uneasily.

"Okay." Ren's head bobbed in a continuous motion. "I'll be fine."

"Right. Yeah. I can...do more than cook, you know." Laufen started.

"Huh?"

"More."

"More what?"

"I've got to get back." Laufen sniffed.

"Are you okay?" Ren was starting to get a bit scared.

Laufen nodded and gulped dryly.

"I'll check up on you later." She briefly stated and then hustled away.

"Laufen." Came a voice from behind Ren.

She wheeled around to find Felson standing behind her. Her thin hands holding the stump of a candle. Another low smile appeared on her face.

"That child has always been like that." Felson stared after her.

"Um, Felson?" Ren looked at the ground.

"Why don't you go lay back down and then ask me your question." Felson nodded towards the bed.

Ren was actually getting a bit chilly, and she was also feeling drowsiness creep up behind her eyes. She made her way to the bed and plopped down. Felson made a move to bring the covers up, but Ren waved at her.

"I can do it."

"Okay." Fel always had a low monotone-ish voice, sort of like the communicator.

Ren actually found Fel's voice relaxing. She sighed and looked at the wall.

"Felson?"

"Yes?"

"Do you...do you hate me?"

"What?" Felson cocked her head.

"You got so upset when you saw my wings, I just thought..." Ren trailed off.

"Well, I was mad at you, for a while." Fel looked away as well, her eyes staring off at the wall.

"But it wasn't my...my fault, was it?"

"I don't think so. I forget that, sometimes." Fel nodded slowly.

"Okay, I'm sorry." Ren nodded.

"It's-"

And then Ren knew no more, for the world around her had gone black, and her consciousness vanished.

When Ren came to, a muddy light was floating in through the windows of the room. Ren felt very heavy. She also felt very hot, in her passed out state, she had managed to toss her covers off, and everywhere that her body made contact with the bed was sticky with sweat.

Ren jumped when she heard sounds coming from the little kitchen in the room. It was probably Laufen. But she was wrong. A figure stepped out, and Ren recognized the clothes as being Geschlachtet's. But this didn't look like Geschlachtet. This didn't have a head. Instead, a dark hole in the neck of the shirt where the head should've been gaped at Ren. The figure raised the darkened halo she had seen Laufen fingering earlier. It raised it above it's hole and hurled it at Ren. It fell short and skidded under the bed. Then the figure charged at Ren.

Ren was feeling heavy, but she moved like she weighed nothing. She was on the floor before she knew it. And then she heard a heavy thud, and the door to the room opened.

"Ren?" Came a gruff voice.

"Well, I knew you were head over heels for me, but..."

It was Trunk. Of course.

"No way! You saw the Headless Haibane?" Trunk burst with excitement as Ren told him her story.

"What?" Ren's breath was shallow, and her hands wouldn't quit shaking.

"It's kindof a ghost or something that lives in this room, and around it." Trunk looked around.

"Ghost?"

"Yeah, I don't really believe in spirits myself. I don't know what this is, but it's real. It can touch you."

For some reason, this didn't comfort Ren very much.

"What...What's it...Why is it here?" Ren searched for the words.

"Dunno." Trunk shrugged. "But everybody usually sees it once."

"So why did you come in, just now?"

"Oh, I was sent to check on you."

"You?" Ren giggled.

"Yeah, me." Trunk nodded with a grin.

"Okay." Ren looked away.

A long moment.

"Yeah." Trunk patted his leg. "Laufen cooked you something, by the way."

"Huh?"

"Yeah, she said you'd probably be hungry and whatnot."

"Oh, well she didn't have to-"

"Hey, when you eat this stuff, you won't refuse her food ever again." Trunk gave a chuckle and produced a covered bowl.

Inside the bowl was what looked to be a bread of some sort. Flecks of brown and gold crept toward a cream colored center, and the object radiated a warm, deep smell.

"What is it?" Ren poked at the bread, and found it to be solid.

"It's pie. Try it, it's Laufen's best dish."

He also produced a spoon.

"Don't forget to leave me some." Trunk grinned.

"But there's only one spoon...how are you...?" Ren looked nervously at the spoon.

"Don't worry, just eat." Trunk's grin spread further.

Ren found that inside the crust was a hot and thick substance. It had a sweet taste that lingered in the mouth, and it filled the nose with the smell of rich and bittersweet fruits, most likely some kind of berry. After a while, Ren didn't notice that she was automatically bringing spoonfuls of it to her mouth, returning the spoon to the pie, and then making the trip again. She also did not notice that Trunk was watching her spoon very closely. Something strange flashed in his eye, just for a second, and Ren looked over at him.

"What?" Ren blinked curiously, the spoon still in her hand.

"You're cute." Trunk said.

Normally, Ren wouldn't have minded, even coming from Trunk. But something in his voice made her squirm a bit.

"Uhm." She mumbled.

Essen walked into the room. At first, Ren forgot that the door was open, and was surprised. Essen began moving some objects around on the table. Laufen came in a few seconds after her.

"Essen, do you need anything else before I...uh...go?"

"Nah, I'm good." Essen nodded.

"I'll be back before sunset. One pair of gloves, uh, right?" She almost whispered.

"Yep." Essen looked out the window.

Laufen briskly left the room, leaving Essen, Trunk, and Ren alone. Essen looked over at Trunk watching Ren, and her face scrunched up a bit.

"Trunk?"

"Hm?"

"What are you doing?"

"Feeding Ren."

"Why don't you go make sure Laufen gets outside okay?" Essen didn't move her eyes off of Trunk.

Trunk sighed and left. Essen accompanied Ren on the bed, fiddling with her fingers.

"Where did Laufen go?" Ren looked out the doorway.

"Listen, Ren, about Trunk, he-"

"Where did she go?" Ren didn't really care about Trunk at the moment.

"Oh...uh, she goes to town every now and then to pick stuff up. Groceries, clothes, things like that."

"I thought you said the town didn't want us to-"

"Yeah." Essen cut her off. "Well, the Haibane Renmei allows Laufen to go to town every few months, so we can survive."

"Why her?"

"Dunno. I guess it's because she's really nice, and doesn't cause too much trouble."

"Wow." Ren sighed.

"Hm?"

"I wish I could go out. I wanna see the wall."

"You do?" Essen sat up.

"Yeah..." Ren sighed again.

"I can take you."

Essen's face again looked strange, if only for just a moment.

-- And, fin. So, some dream stuff. It doesn't really have much to do with the storyline, so don't worry too much, but there's symbolism, and it does tie in with some real events later in ze story, so stay tuned...er...reading. Yes. And the Headless Haibane. Gotta keep it eerie. I want to have a lot of "unreal" characters in this story as well as Haibane and townsfolk. And the Trunk/Ren thing...kinda makes me wanna bump this up to M, but seeing as how nothing will really happen, and if I put this in M, no one will find it on account of there being NO HB fanfics in M...makes me not want to. Ah well. Yeah, you get to see what's beyond the wall too in the next Chappy (or at least what I think should be.) and It's quite neat, if I do say so meself. So please stay tuned!

-- Thanks for reading so far, if you've reviewed or not ,(Shout-out to Bunch-O-Nuts.) thanks for looking! Stay tuned (again!)

7. Deception, Reminder, The Sea of Glass

****HAIBANE RENMEI:****

****DER****

****AUSFALL****

****DES****

****FLUGES****

****A fanfiction.****

****By****

****Micheal Gioe****

****(This is a Fanfiction, so I claim no ownership of the Haibane Renmei Title or any of it's original characters or names, except my own)****

You get to explore the countryside a bit in this chap. Meet the cottage, some of the town, and beyond the wall.

****7-- Deception****

****Reminder****

****The Sea of Glass****

"It's close to winter, you know." Essen muttered to Ren as they

slowly walked down the dirty road away from the looming mass that was The Old House.

> Ren noticed that she felt lighter and more free when she was out of that dark hole of a home. Things were brighter and sang more, even though dark gray clouds whirled about the town and bitter, skeletal trees lined the roads. As they walked, Ren noticed that the dull pain in her back gradually receded until she didn't notice it anymore.
 "Do I get a coat?" Ren looked over at Essen.

> "Yeah, I guess Laufen'll have to go out and get you one." As they walked, Ren saw the familiar figure of the gaunt, old Community Watchman. He was watching the path to the Haibane Renmei intently. Essen nudged Ren again, but this time Ren nudged back. The watchman's head snapped on it's neck to meet them, his little eyes sharp.
 "Hey! You!" He pointed a finger at Essen and Ren.

> "Yes?" Essen calmly answered.
 "You should return back to Old House immediately!" He barked.

> "Why? What's going on"
 "There's a stray Haibane wandering about." The Watchman furrowed his brow.

> "So"
 "The Haibane was spotted near the Wall"

> "Oh..." Essen trailed off uninterestedly.
 "Where are you two going?" The man snorted and crossed his arms.

> "To the Haibane Renmei Temple." Essen nodded in the direction of the path.
 "Of course you are." He replied just as he had before.

> He turned away, facing the road to the upper farmlands. Essen grabbed Ren's hand and quietly jerked her down the road to the town. The watchman didn't turn to spot them.
 "Essen?" Ren hurriedly puffed as they rushed down the road.

> "Yeah?" Essen didn't look back.
 "Why did we lie?" Ren squealed as Essen tugged her down a steep hill off the side of the road.

> "That old man wouldn't have let us go into town, you idiot!" Essen yelled back as they splashed across a stream.
 "Why not"

> "I told you why, because they hate us!" Essen called as they trudged through a clump of bushes on the other side of the stream.
 "Gesh?" Ren heard Essen call from up ahead. As the pair ran alongside a grove of trees, they stopped at one. Geschlachtet was leaning against a tree, panting.

> "What the Hell are you doing all the way out here!" Essen yelled at Gesh.
 "I was going to go to town to swipe some coats for me, Stiegen, and Abstiegen"

> "No, the Community Watchman said he saw you by the wall." Ren quietly piped in.
 Gesh stared at her for a minute, her eyes were murky with some kind of confused haze, something that wasn't natural. The ragged wings on her back twitched every now and then, showing dark grey and red bone underneath. Her halo flickered, and every time it did, Gesh winced, like it was hurting her.

> "I went by the wall because I thought I saw Laufen there. I caught up with...it...it wasn't Laufen, Essen." She turned to Essen. "It was that...that man you described. The one with the grey eyes." Essen's eyes narrowed, then they widened in horror.
 "Yeah. Now I know why you guys didn't like him. I started running away from him, and along the wall. I looked back, and he was there. I kept running, I looked back, and he was there again. He wouldn't stop following me!" Gesh grabbed at Essen's shirt, tears in her eyes. "I was so scared"

> "Hey, it's okay." Essen patted Gesh's head.
 "I finally got to the forest here, and every time I looked back I could see his grey, horrible eyes through the trees, always at the same distance. Oh God, Essen, please don't leave!" Gesh clung tighter to Essen's shirt as she gritted her teeth and let out little whines.

> "I'm not gonna leave you." Essen whispered dully.
 "I don't

wanna go back to the Old House, either." Gesh swallowed and gave a little chuckle.

> "Why not"
 "He's there too. The Balail."

"The what now?" Essen raised an eyebrow.

> "I saw him the other day, in the Illusion Frame." Gesh gasped. "Come on now, we all know that thing isn't really haunted." Essen cooed.
 "No, it's not. But he was there, and he was...he was talking to me." Gesh shook.

> Essen's face clouded with thought. She obviously didn't know any really comforting words, as she would merely rock back and forth while holding Gesh, looking off into the distance.
 "It's okay now"

> "Essen, are we...?" Ren quietly motioned to where she thought the wall was.
 "Huh?" Gesh looked up at Ren, her eyes red and puffy.

> "She wanted to go see the hole in the wall"
 "No, I'm not going. No." Gesh shook her head. "Not after that thing came after me." Ren felt her heart sink. She had wanted so badly to go to the wall. She thought it might be worse to leave Geschlachtet here alone than not go, however.

> "Can I just go by myself, then?" Ren raised her eyebrows hopefully.
 "Yeah, I guess so. You know how to get there?" Essen murmured without looking up.

> "No, not really." Ren looked around her.
 "Um. Well, just go that way" Ren pointed down the grove. "After a little bit, you should come out in a farmer's field. You should be able to see the town from there. Go along the outskirts...really along, don't come within one hundred feet of anyone, or anything." Essen looked up where she was pointing. "And then just go north, and you'll be able to see it. Trust me." "Okay." Ren nodded.

> Ren was a little reluctant to leave. For one, she wasn't sure if she would be able to find her way, and she wasn't really looking forward to running into this thing that Gesh had just described. But Gesh was a bit off. She was always blaming the supernatural, and seeing things. Despite all this, however, she set off.
 At first, she was a bit wary. Her eyes darted from tree to tree, and with every step she took, she swore she could hear that same raspy breathing she had heard that night in the back wings of the Old House. But whenever she stopped, it turned out to be a mere crow, or the wind. Then she began to enjoy her walk. It gave her time to think. She couldn't remember when she hadn't been around people for longer than this since she had arrived here. She felt even more free than she had when she first stepped out of Old House's doors. The dark greens of the trees overhead and around soothed the eyes, and the soft padding of her wooden shoes on the soft dirt path beneath her feet created a slow rhythm. Before she knew it, she had come out into a clearing. No, a field. Somewhat shaggy rows of crops lined the field, and tucked away in a corner of the field, just against the woods was a small cottage. The cottage was dark, and it didn't look like it had been used recently. Ren crept over to investigate, but all that she could see inside was blackness, and light from another window on the other side of the cottage. This didn't bother her much, but she saw something that unsettled her a bit. There was a lock on the door. The lock was brand new, and so was the door. The ivy that attacked and strangled the old crumbly stone of the cottage didn't touch the door.

After a few moments, though, Ren's mind focused a bit. It was most likely just storage for a townspeople, probably a warehouse for the farmer's crops. It still made Ren a bit uneasy, though, and she couldn't figure out why. Maybe the fact that anything could be in there kept her unnerved. She hustled away, trying not to look into any more of the windows. Essen was right, it wasn't long until she saw the town. More like the back of the town. Large three and four story buildings rose up just beyond the trees, their windows like eyes peering through the trees at Ren. She was behind the town, so she didn't really have to sneak, unless someone came out their back door to dump garbage or something. She could hear a dog barking somewhere, and a loud cough, but there were hardly any human sounds at all. Strange, she thought. The buildings were all in good condition, and she could see lights on in windows, but she only heard an occasional clapping of one pair of heels up or down a distant street, and no voices. Then she saw her objective. The wall.

The wall was indeed huge. It must have stretched eight or so stories into the sky. It was a massive stone obelisk, dark and domineering. Her eyes ran along the wall until she came to what she was looking for. The hole. It, as well as the wall, was massive. An entire wing of Old House might fit inside the area of it. Definitely the common area would fit. A mountain of rubble lay on the inside of the wall. Ren sighed at the sight of it, but knew her trip would be in vain without climbing it. Ren huffed and panted as she grabbed piece after piece of stone, heaving herself upwards. She supposed she could've walked up the hill, it wasn't that steep, but the fear of slipping off a loose stone and sliding down the hill of broken rock didn't appeal to her too much. She was a wimp when it came to adventure, so she crawled. Every now and then she would hit her knee on a stone, or scrape her arm, but she tried to keep quiet. Finally the pile leveled out. She carefully stepped up to where wall's interior could be seen. Of course, the wall had been damaged years before, so the Haibane Renmei or the town had laid down fresh stones around the inside of the wall so one couldn't go inside them. But that didn't matter once she saw it. The other side.

> She looked down. About twenty or thirty feet down, a cliff leveled out into a black forest. The forest was very thick, and extended out a good distance, before dropping off into what she could only know of as a sea. The sea, however, was perfect. It was smooth. Smooth like a sea of Glass. The grey clouds continued on into the horizon until they merged with the sea, and mirrored themselves back up to the forest. Ren felt her lips curl into a smile, and she began breathing in quicker. She didn't know why this view was making her so happy. So there was a bit of land outside the walls after all. Surrounded by what looked like water. She might actually be in a real place after all, and not dreaming. What if she could go back home? But as she looked out, the scenery began to change. Ren didn't notice exactly when it started turning, but soon the horizon and the land below was a solid grey. A tiny set of ruts led from the cliff off into the distance. And on the horizon arose a cluster of dark shapes. Varying sizes, but all indistinguishable. A sliver of smoke slithered up into the sky. Then more smoke emerged from the structures. The sky turned black with the smoke, and before Ren knew it, it was beginning to snow. Little grey flecks, unlike snowflakes. And they weren't cold, they were hot. The dark clouds were slowly billowing towards Ren. She

was frightened at first, but then calmed. She felt like she wanted to touch them, to be with them. They were very close now.
> Suddenly, her right foot began sliding. Sliding down a smooth stone. Her stomach dropped, and she felt her leg starting to move. She quickly moved backwards, but this caused her to end up on her back on the pile of wall. A sharp pain in her ankle. It was bleeding. How? Did she cut it on something? Her other ankle was bleeding now too, in the same place as her right ankle. She picked herself up and hurriedly bounded down the hill of stones back down onto the grass. She looked down at her ankles. Nothing. No blood. Had she imagined it? The world outside the walls had also changed. Now it had returned back to the endless horizon of glass, and the black forest.<p>

It was getting dark. The sky was building up grey clouds, threatening bad weather. Crows' heads snapped to and fro in nervous anticipation. Gusts of wind blew across the rolling fields of the farms, and the farmers in their houses would watch out of their foggy windows. In the town, a mother would sit quietly at a large wooden table by the window, reading a thick book. A distant rumble rouses her children, who run around the apartment, chattering. The mother looks out of her tall window and sees the lone uniformed man slowly walking the street, looking up into every window, glancing at every door. His eyes meet the mother's and they stare for a moment. The man continues on. The mother sighs. Laufen. She sits on a stone bench along a narrow street. Bags full of groceries and supplies congregate around her, but she is oblivious to both them and the impending clouds. She holds a simple bowl in her hand, a mound of thick noodles filling the bowl. The noodles are made with lots of yolk, unlike most thin noodles, which are made with durum wheat. The Spatzle, they call it. If you get it from the right shop, you can even have a spatzle with little chunks of potatoe in it. The potatoes are salty, they boil them in salt water and then cut them, so the potatoe actually stands out in the noodles. Like a punctuation mark. It's a little rare to find, because not many people in town like the Haibane, but you may buy a Radler. The Radler is usually Pils and lemonade mixed, but Laufen doesn't drink alcohol, so she usually just requests a Radler without Pils. This gets her some strange looks, but she doesn't mind. As long as she can enjoy her meal. She used to enjoy meals more, though. She used to enjoy them with Stiegen. Laufen's fork stopped short of her mouth. This thought paralyzed her for a minute. A faint shudder, and then she was back to eating her meal. Stiegen wasn't right, anyways. He and Geschlachtet, they were odd. Laufen had found someone new anyway. Around her, the storm swirled and the sky became a soup of dark clouds and little splashes of light grey. Laufen finished her meal, and wrenched her bags up. She walked slowly down the crowded street, leaving her bowl and utensils at the bench.

Ren hurried back along the way she had come, the backs of buildings now a group of dark shapes accented with lit squares. The trees were dancing. Not a good dance, though, they would dance in one direction, and then another. The wind was moving. It was restless, and instinct told Ren this wasn't good. She reached the edge of the field, and then she saw it. The cottage. Trees beat against it, the wind

whipping across the field. The lock. It was gone. Ren's stomach tightened. She tried her hardest not to look at the fast approaching cottage as she hustled along. She could just see the wind pushing open the door as she walked by, revealing whatever was inside, waiting for her. She sprinted past the entire cottage, sprinted through the field, and into the woods, and didn't stop sprinting until she came to the grove of trees where she had left Essen and Gesh. They weren't there. A white piece of paper flapping in the wind. A small rock held it down to the ground as the wind tried so desperately to pick it up and take it to town. Ren ripped the paper from under the rock and held it up to her face.

> "Ren. I took Gesh back to Old House. If you want me to, I can come back and walk you back as well, but it looks like it may storm soon. If you'd rather, just start heading back to Old House and I'll meet you on the way. Hope you had fun at the wall. If you want me to pick you up, stay there, if not, start heading back the same way we came.
 -Essen"

> Ren put the note in her pocket. She sort of wanted to head back on her own, but she wasn't exactly sure how to. If she found the main road to town, she could probably go straight back to Old House. From behind her, Ren heard a strange sound. Almost like a mumbling. She turned, but could see nothing but the dark woods. She could almost hear words. Ren started to walk towards the woods, and the words became more distinct. "Brennen!" A shout jarred her out of her daze momentarily. It was Laufen. She was hobbling out of the woods, her arms weighted down with bags.
 "Oh, hey Laufen." Ren muttered, her eyes wandering back to the woods.

> "Come on, there's a storm coming!" Laufen grabbed Ren's arm and tugged.
 Ren's mind came into focus, and she instantly forgot why she had been staring off. She and Laufen made their way back to the road and trudged towards the Old House. Another rumble rolled over the now distant walls and carried itself across fields and over roads. The sky churned like a massive grey stew. Finally, it released the rain, and the rain covered the land, forming miniature lakes in minutes, and blinding anyone unfortunate enough to be outside. The dark shape of the Old House loomed before them. The old watchman hadn't been on the road. Laufen bent over her bags to keep the contents dry. Ren kept her head low just to keep the rain from her eyes. Up ahead, she saw the figure of Essen. Essen was engaged in a conversation with a taller girl. Felson. Upon their approach, Essen turned to Ren and Laufen. "Let's get inside!" Essen shouted over the rain. Ren was a little angry that Essen had decided to talk to Felson rather than come and get her, but when they entered, she was told why.

> "Gesh is missing." Essen wiped her limp wet hair from her face.
 "Did she get lost?" Laufen's mouth opened slightly and froze.

> "No." Essen slowly shook her head.
 "Well where is she?" Ren looked around the common room.

> "She's gone. She's gone to die." Felson muttered.
 "Huh?" Ren furrowed her eyebrows. Laufen just stared off into space.

> "It's too late for her, she ran off to die in peace." Essen looked up at Ren, her eyes void.
 "How do you know?" Ren refused to believe this could happen so suddenly.

> "She started acting really hysterical. Yelling and cursing as soon as we got into the house." Essen started. "She said she was going to go wait for death, and she started to run away. So I tried to grab one of her wings and hold on to her." Essen looked down.
 Felson raised an object to Ren's field of vision. A grimy stick with a few little black feathers still clinging to the sinew.

> "Oh God." Ren threw herself backwards, and stumbled a few

steps.
 "That's what happens to bad little Haibane." Essen
muttered.

_--Sorry for the long delay in getting the next chap up. Lots of
other things cropping up. I'm still here, though, and am still going
to finish this. Okay, so you saw beyond the wall...yeah...nothing too
spectacular, but whatever. I don't know if anyone will get what the
abyss turns into for Ren, but you most likely will later. And in the
next chapter, you get to see a sinbound "die". Fun! (Oh, and sorry
for it being harder to read this time, what with being all smooshed
together and all. The documentsubmitter wouldn't take my sxw file for
some reason...so yeah...)_

--Thanks for reading, and RR if you can!

End
file.